



The Touched: *A Very Black Comedy*

Adam Fieled

The Touched: A Very Black Comedy, by Adam Fieled, was produced by Penn State University's Outlaw Playwrights, in room six of the Theater Arts Building in State College, Pa, on February 6, 1997.

(A dilapidated old room— the Munsters meets the Bates motel— downstage left, window. Maybe an old chaise lounge and some flower-print chairs would be appropriate. Enter Helen Harold, a voluptuous young blonde— but dressed like Trent Reznor's wet dream: Goth city. With her is Timothy Whitehead, a very square GQ looking yuppie in a Gap suit.)

H: Look at this musty old place; I haven't been up here for months, not since Maggie's funeral. I made it beautiful for that; I dusted the floor and polished the tables. Everything looked new. Now here I am, the sole heir of a ghost palace! (walks stage left, gestures) Look out this window, Timothy; do you see that tree? My grandfather used to hide there when he was a kid. Eventually, he snuck girls up there too. He's another dead one.

T: Hmph! You know, talking about dead people, this place is so eerie, it's like "Twin Peaks." I feel...presences here...like we're not alone!

H: (Helen laughs nervously and pulls Timothy towards her) Don't say that, Timothy, you're frightening me! I've felt the same thing— this room has a power of its own, Timothy, this room is...(she pauses to lean in close to his face)...inhabited!

T: (breaking away from her) I wonder if we're disturbing the inhabitants?

H: (Helen moves rapidly to the windowsill) Well, maybe we are, but we have every right to; this isn't their room anymore; they're long dead!

T: (moving to console her) I see this is freakin' you out; shall we go back downstairs?

H: (as if shaking off spooks) No!...No, I'm going to stay here. (grabbing his hand) Will you stay with me, Timothy?

T: (takes on suave LOVERMAN tone) Hey, sure, baby, it's all right, I'll stay with you. I don't know what we're going to...(closes in on her, heavy sleaze) do here, though.

H: (breaking away nervously from his grip) We're going to wait. There's something else you should know about this room— Maggie died here, my grandfather did too. He used to bring his mistress up here, and my grandmother caught them, and...

T: (obviously spooked and getting impatient now) What, Helen, what? You drag me up here to tell me about your family of fucking freaks? What the hell do you want from m...

H: (screaming, hysterical): SHE KILLED HIM! MY GRANDMOTHER KILLED HIM!

T: Oh, that's great, Helen, fantastic! What the hell do you want me to do about it?

H: (runs and grabs him) Listen to me, Timothy, just listen! You can't leave me alone in this room! There's a curse on me and you've got to help me!

T: Man, this is just too fuckin' weird. I'm leaving!

H: (suddenly calm) You can't.

T: What do you mean, I can't? (Timothy tries opening the door— it stays resolutely shut— he begins to panic)

H: (suddenly very much the chastising, superior bitch) Stop struggling, Timothy. Come here, sit down, and I'll tell you what's happening. (Timothy gives up and follows her order) You think you chose to come here today. You wanted to fuck me and you know I sleep around. But you didn't choose to come here today, Timothy— I put a spell on you.

T: (tries to scream, chokes on his breath, gasps)

H: Stop fighting it. Stop. (he does) Good. Now listen, Timothy— I chose you because you're touched. You have the magic in you and you don't even know it. There's a curse on me and only you can break it. Until you do, you're under my control (pats him on the head)— got that?

T: (barely spits it out, with vengeance) F...f...fine!

H: Good. Now, swear on your mother's eyes that you're not going to leave me here.

T: (frantically, struggling to form the words)
I...won't...bbbring...my....mother...into...this...she's a Christian!!

H: (strokes his leg like she would a cat) Oh but you will, Timothy— swear on your mother's eyes that you're not going to leave me.

T: I...won't...leave you here...BITCH!

H: (sitting in his lap) Good! (kisses him on the cheek) Remember, darling, that was a binding oath you just took— if you break it, the only way to pay is with blood!

T: (regaining his ability to speak) Are you finally going to tell me what this shit means now?

H: My mother hates me. She's jealous as hell— all witches are. She's also wiser and more powerful than I am— celibate witches gain strength! She's cursed me. She's got me trapped here. Sometimes she won't let me eat, sometimes she won't let me sleep, and she keeps threatening to kill me. And you can kill her. You're touched. All you have to do is keep saying Hail Marys until she drops! Only...Timothy...(runs her hand through his hair) you must not let go of my hand. Do you understand that? You must not let go of my hand. Promise me you won't.

T: Helen, I promise you, I won't let go of your hand. But can we get this thing over with now? (very little boyish) I've got a bad headache and my tummy hurts!

H: (smiling radiantly) Yes, Timothy, let's go...up we go...there's a good boy...

(they exit arm-in-arm, Timothy limping— end scene)

(Lights up on a tiny, sparsely furnished bedroom. On a rocking chair, facing the audience and knitting violently is Victoria Harold, Helen's mother. She has a furrowed brow and stern look about her— very Madame DeFarge.)

V: The child thinks I don't know what she's up to: the ignorance! Does she think my power that shriveled? Touched he may be, but he'll not leave this house alive! I'll send that Hail Mary through him with a force Mary herself'll feel! She thinks she's going to leave me to die alone; the selfishness! Why should she be allowed to leave, when no one else has! That little damned whore! I own her, body and soul, and she don't even know it! I am the goddess of this house, and no one's taking that away from me— the goddess!

(Helen and Timothy enter, hands clasped tightly. They approach Victoria's chair.)

V: (turning herself in her chair slightly to face them) You're not leaving this house, Helen, you're not! You're stupid to think you can! No Hail Mary will save you!

H: (beseechingly, she puts a firm arm around Timothy's waist) Concentrate, Timothy, pray; and don't let go! Mother, I've been taken advantage of enough; you've abused me since I was born, used your power against me, and I won't take it anymore!

V: (begins to knit again) You can't contradict a curse. What I say, goes! There's no way around it; you're not getting out of this house! Let her go, Timothy; what do you care about her? Why should you be dragged into her mess? She doesn't care about you, she's just using you; she'll destroy you, if that's what it takes!

H: NOO!! Concentrate, Timothy, don't listen to her...(Timothy begins to chant, with his eyes shut, "Hail Mary full of grace, Hail...")....AAAHHH! Tighter, hold my hand tighter; it's burning up; it's on fire; tighter! CONCENTRATE!

V: Let go, boy! Let go, and end your pain! Why should you suffer for her? You're doing this for nothing! You're suffering in vain!

H: (Helen appears to fading fast under her mother's gaze. Timothy is still muttering, catatonic) It's not in vain! OOOOOOOOWWW! Don't let go! I love you for this, Timothy, we'll get married, have children, I swear just please HOLD ON...

V: Lies, lies! She's playing with your mind, boy; she's a witch! She wants your blood, and she won't stop until you're dead...(Victoria begins sputtering and drops her knitting)

H: You're doing it, Timothy; we're winning! I can feel it! Concentrate, hold TIGHTER, concentrate, don't let go—don't let go!

V: You're going to kill me; have mercy! Timothy! Do you want this guilt on your hands? How will you live with yourself? Let go of her hand; and give back the only thing this old maid still owns!

H: You don't own me, you hag! Don't let go, Timothy!

V: (coughing gets worse) You're going to kill me; my heart can't take the strain! Have mercy, have mercy! I'll let you leave, Helen, I promise; have MERCY!

H: (triumphant hand placed on hip) Why should I? Tighter, Timothy, harder— "Hail Mary, full of Grace"— SAY IT!

T: (sweating profusely, Timothy stumbles) H-H-Hail Mary, full of Grace, Hail Mary, full of...

V: You're choking me. I can't breathe...Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!

H: Harder! Don't let go!

V: You...leave...mercy...mercy! (she appears to die)

H: Keep on going! Harder!

T: (snapping out of his trance) Helen, she's dead! We killed her!

H: (letting go of his hand, Helen opens a window and fans herself daintily) We did what we needed to do. The stubborn old bitch only lived to torture me anyway.

T: I thought she was faking it; did you know it was for real?

H: Of course I knew it was for real! You're touched, for God's sake! You could kill a battalion!

T: She's a human being, for fuck's sake. How could you take advantage of my power?

H: (comes down from windowsill and faces him) What were my options, Timothy? Let you run away, and lose my one chance to escape this hell?

T: You didn't have to kill her! She was begging for your mercy!

H: I had to kill her. (she sidles up to him) That's what witches do, remember?

T: You evil bitch! (throws her aside) You manipulated me! Hail Mary, full of Grace, Hail Mary, full of...

H: Stop that, Timothy, you're hurting me...you're making me sick! Mercy! Have mercy on me; I shouldn't have killed her, it was a mistake; have mercy!

T: Fine, bitch; I'm not gonna take part in a second homicide! But I'm leaving, and I'm warning you— if I ever see you again, I'm going to fucking KILL you!

H: You're weak; I need a strong man!

T: You need some serious therapy, is what you need, BITCH! I'm leaving, and if the cops come, I was never here in the first place— got that?

H: FUCK OFF, you BLOODY WANKER!

(Timothy exits, slamming the door behind him)

H: (slumps into a chair) Where the fuck am I gonna go? I didn't have anyone but this old dead witch. (she rises nervously) What am I gonna do with a witches' corpse anyway? Throw it on the fire, or in the woods, or...

(Victoria's eyes open suddenly, and she rises. Helen freezes)

V: You underestimated me. You were deceived by a ruse. You don't have a witches' suspicious heart; you have the heart of a woman! A plain old ordinary CUNT! You can't speak— don't even try. You're going to serve me until the day you die— silently, like a dog! And, Helen...(Victoria claps her hands, and Timothy re-enters)...say hello to your new father-in-law!

(Victoria and Timothy passionately embrace, while Helen falls to her knees and slumps to the floor.)

T: (smirking, breaks embrace briefly, looks at audience) Now THAT'S witchcraft!
(Timothy and Victoria embrace wildly again)

End Scene— End Play